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MARILYNN “LYNN” HUTTON, ILWU LOCAL 13

INTERVIEWEE: MARILYN “LYNN” HUTTON WITH LLOYD HUTTON

INTERVIEWERS: HARVEY SCHWARTZ

SUBJECTS: 1934 STRIKE; LLOYD HUTTON WORKING HIDES; LLOYD HUTTON WORKING COPRA; LLOYD HUTTON’S INJURIES ON THE JOB; 1971 STRIKE; CATALINA; CRANE WORK; BEING MARRIED TO A LONGSHOREMAN; BENEFITS OF BELONGING TO ILWU; ILWU HEALTH INSURANCE; HARRY BRIDGES; RICHARD AUSTIN; PARMELEE LEONARD AUSTIN.

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[00:00:00] **HARVEY SCHWARTZ:** This is Harvey Schwartz in Long Beach here with Lynn Hutton. This will be part of the ILWU Oral History collection, or the Pensioners’ Association collection. Lynn, when were you born and where were you born?

[00:00:19] **LYNN HUTTON:** I was born in Richmond in 1938.

[00:00:25] **HARVEY:** Your dad was a longshore worker?

[00:00:26] **LYNN:** Yeah, he was a seaman, he was a piledriver, and he was a longshoreman, a checker..

[00:00:37] **LLOYD:** Then he retired as a Clerk.

[00:00:38] **LYNN:** Yeah.

[00:00:42] **HARVEY:** When did he retire, do you remember?

[00:00:44] **LYNN:** Golly.

[00:00:45] **LLOYD HUTTON:** 62.

[00:00:46] **LYNN:** Was it 62?

[00:00:47] **LLOYD:** Him and Paul [last name?] retired at the same time.

[00:00:49] **LYNN:** Oh, okay. He was born in 1902.

[00:00:58] **HARVEY:** Did he tell you about the 1934 strike?

[00:01:00] **LYNN:** He did tell us how my dad was, unlike Lloyd, I guess I kind of married the antithesis of my dad in some ways. My dad was very politically oriented.

[00:01:19] **HARVEY:** In what sense?

[00:01:21] **LYNN:** He was very involved in the union.

[00:01:27] **HARVEY:** What was his name?

[00:01:29] **LYNN:** His name was Parmelee Leonard Austin.

[00:01:35] **HARVEY:** How do you spell that?

[00:01:36] **LYNN:** P-A-R-M-E-LEE Leonard Austin.

[00:01:41] **HARVEY:** That's Richard's [Austin] dad?

[00:01:43] **LYNN:** Yeah, Richard's dad.

[00:01:44] **HARVEY:** Right. When you say he was politically active, in what way was he politically active?

[00:01:51] **LYNN:** Well, he had that kind of a spirit. He supported everything, he was down there picketing.

[00:01:58] **LLOYD:** Active in all activities.

[00:02:01] **LYNN:** Yeah, he was just—he had the spirit of an activist and always did.

[00:02:07] **HARVEY:** Okay. Lloyd [Hutton] is sitting in on this interview. Was he involved in politics outside the union?

[00:02:14] **LYNN:** He was not.

[00:02:15] **HARVEY:** Okay. What did he tell you about the 1934 strike? Was he on the waterfront by then, by 34?

[00:02:23] **LYNN:** He was not on the—he went there shortly after that.

[00:02:30] **HARVEY:** Okay. What was he doing before that, do you know?

[00:02:34] **LYNN:** He was a piledriver. He helped on the—this is what he told me anyway—he was a piledriver on the Golden Gate Bridge.

[00:02:48] **HARVEY:** Really?

[00:02:50] **LYNN:** That's what he told us. Now, whether he was the dad telling kids stories or not, I don't know.

[00:02:56] **LLOYD:** They had those cofferdams. Huge cofferdams to put the piling in. You know? Piling, that's what he did.

[00:03:03] **LYNN:** But he was also a seaman. He was a seaman. My dad was uneducated, but very, very smart. Very smart. And so he went to school as an adult, and went to night school for along time. Learned to speak Spanish. Traveled all over South America and Mexico and Spain. He went to the University of Madrid in Spain and took some classes over there. He was kind of like . . .

[00:03:39] **LLOYD:** . . . a free spirit.

[00:03:40] **LYNN:** He traveled with his umbrella and his knapsack. That's what he traveled with.

[00:03:46] **HARVEY:** It was another era.

[00:03:48] **LYNN:** It was another era, yeah. And he stayed with families in South America and Spain and stuff, yeah.

[00:03:54] **HARVEY:** Okay. In case we haven't mentioned it, this was Rich Austin's dad. He stayed in Spain. Was he involved in the Spanish Civil War at all?

[00:04:04] **LYNN:** He was not.

[00:04:05] **HARVEY:** Okay, so he managed to skirt that, it sounds like.

[00:04:09] **LYNN:** Yeah.

[00:04:09] **HARVEY:** Okay. Did he tell you anything about the 1936 longshore strike? There was a strike after 34, if he was involved in that one.

[00:04:19] **LYNN:** I don't think he was. I don't think he was in until just . . . I'm awful about [dates] .

[00:04:30] **LLOYD:** Prior to the war is when he started longshoring, I think.

[00:04:37] **HARVEY:** What did he do during World War II? Was he still a longshoreman?

[00:04:45] **LYNN:** Yes.

[00:04:46] **LLOYD:** He was a longshoreman.

[00:04:47] **HARVEY:** Did he tell you about the 1948 strike at all?

[00:04:54] **LYNN:** He kind of kept the family separated from things like that. We lived in Marin County, in part of it, and, of course, he worked in San Francisco and that. So we were kept a little out of things. We were at a distance, kind of like. But we did live a few places. We lived in San Francisco, we lived in Oakland, we lived in Richmond. All the time he was longshoring, I believe.

[00:05:34] **HARVEY:** Where did you grow up basically?

[00:05:36] **LYNN:** In Marin County—Fairfax—until I was 12. Then we moved down to Wilmington, down here.

[00:05:47] **HARVEY:** Oh, you did? Did he move down here to work down here?

[00:05:50] **LYNN:** Yeah. He and my mother had separated and he had come down here a couple years earlier, or a year or so earlier, and then he moved the family down here.

[00:06:03] **LLOYD:** He was in Local 63.

[00:06:06] **HARVEY:** Okay, so he was a Clerk in Local 63.

[00:06:08] **LLOYD:** Right, Local 63.

[00:06:14] **HARVEY:** Did you go to high school down here?

[00:06:16] **LYNN:** I did.

[00:06:17] **HARVEY:** In Wilmington?

[00:06:18] **LYNN:** Yes.

[00:06:18] **HARVEY:** Whereabouts?

[00:06:20] **LYNN:** Banning High School.

[00:06:23] **HARVEY:** As a youngster, what kind of work did you do? Did you do any work at all?

[00:06:27] **LYNN:** I only had one job—well, I had two jobs. When I was in high school, before graduation, I took a test for civil service. So when I graduated, I was offered a job working civil service. The first job I had was working over at Fort MacArthur in San Pedro. The second job I had was certificating seamen for the Coast Guard.

[00:06:57] **HARVEY:** How did you get that job?

[00:06:59] **LYNN:** It was just a civil service job.

[00:07:03] **HARVEY:** When did you marry Lloyd?

[00:07:05] **LYNN:** In 1956. I was 18.

[00:07:11] **HARVEY:** What was it like being married to a longshoreman?

[00:07:15] **LYNN:** Well, we were young and nothing bothered us. We had three kids kind of like this. Nothing seemed hard to us really. I remember him working—I was a traditional homemaker and he was a traditional breadwinner. He went off early to work every single day. He'd go down at 5:30 or 6:00 to get a job at the hall, and in those days, they worked till 6:00 at night. They'd start work at 8:00, but he'd still have—those were long days for him. He'd come home tired. He worked hard. He was a very, very good provider. He worked every chance he could.

[00:08:20] **HARVEY:** Any incidents that you recall at all? Does anything stand out about his experience as far as you were concerned?

[00:08:27] **LYNN:** I can remember some of the cargo that he worked, like hides and copra and stuff like that, and how dirty he came home. But he was injured a couple times. He'd fallen in the hold, and that was

worrisome. And he never went on disability. We have a pride about us, and he never went on disability. We always took care of ourselves. We never asked for any help during any of the strikes. We knew they were coming up, we saved for them. So we've kind of had not a very chaotic life. Some people might call it a boring life, but we call it just nicely lived.

[00:09:18] **HARVEY:** Sure. He was hurt a couple times. How badly was he hurt?

[00:09:25] **LYNN:** Well, not horribly.

[00:09:28] **LLOYD:** Not terribly.

[00:09:31] **LYNN:** He broke his—

[00:09:31] **LLOYD:** A bone come out here.

[00:09:33] **LYNN:** Yeah.

[00:09:34] **LLOYD:** And my partner, he was a medic during the war—World War II—and I laid down there like that and he looked down and he put his foot on there and pulled my arm. Went to [unintelligible] , and went to the hospital to be X-rayed and they says, “Huh. Nothing’s broke.” And I says, “How about the bone that was sticking out of here?” “Oh!” So they gets up to X-ray and looks at it and looks at it. “By god,” he says, “there is a crack.” [laughter] It went back together perfect. They put a soft cast on it and I went back to work the next day.

[00:10:10] **HARVEY:** It didn’t break the skin?

[00:10:11] **LLOYD:** Yeah, the bone come out of the skin.

[00:10:15] **HARVEY:** Compound fracture.

[00:10:16] **LLOYD:** Yeah, but when Frank pulled on it, it went right back perfect. Probably one in a thousand.

[00:10:23] **HARVEY:** Yeah, really. I was a medic, too, but I don’t think I could have done that one. Wow. That’s impressive. How about during the 71 strike? Lloyd talked a bit about that. Do you have any additional recollections of that strike? They were off for quite a long time.

[00:10:45] **LYNN:** That’s kind of the one that you worked through, wasn’t it? Was that the one you worked at Catalina?

[00:10:49] **LLOYD:** Oh, I’ve got to tell you about this one, Harry. That 71 strike, I was working in Catalina. Catalina was not under . . . how would I say this . . . it was not under the PMA [Pacific Maritime Association] in any way.

[00:11:07] **HARVEY:** Right.

[00:11:07] **LYNN:** Nobody was striking down there.

[00:11:09] **LLOYD:** Yeah. So when we worked, we worked through that 71 strike, and I donated half my wages to the union for that time.

[00:11:24] **LYNN:** It wasn't out of the kindness of our hearts, that was one of the union stipulations for continuing to work.

[00:11:32] **HARVEY:** Sure, it makes sense. Then you went steady about in the 70s.

[00:11:37] **LLOYD:** Yeah.

[00:11:37] **HARVEY:** Where did you work when you went steady.

[00:11:40] **LLOYD:** I worked for different crane people, different outfits, different stevedore companies. I worked for Cooper, I worked for [ITS, I worked for OCL, Main Terminal?] .

[00:11:54] **HARVEY:** Okay. And then you retired in 02?

[00:12:05] **LLOYD:** Yeah.

[00:12:05] **HARVEY:** Lynn, do you remember anything about the 2002 lockout at all? He retired that year. The big lockout, it was only a 10-day situation.

[00:12:16] **LYNN:** Yeah. Yeah, it didn't affect me very much. I never—early on, some of the wives used to go down and pick up the checks and stuff for their husbands on Friday. He said, "That's one thing you're never going to do." And so I stayed away from his work. I took care of my work and let him take care of his work. And I didn't have too much input into his job.

[00:12:52] **HARVEY:** Looking back, reflecting on your life, looking back at the union and so forth, do you have anything you'd like to add?

[00:13:02] **LYNN:** Well, they've given us, the union—you know, Lloyd is an uneducated man, and for him to be able to make the type of money that he did and for us to have such a good life—we own this little house, but we also own other things, too. We choose to live here. We don't have to live here, we choose to live here. And so working conditions, of course, have changed a great deal from the time he started until now, and he was—did you tell him about Richard? I don't know if he's interested in Richard [Lothar?] . Do you want to tell him about that, about when he worked for you and you worked for him? Is that kosher to say that?

[00:13:59] **LLOYD:** Richard, my partner, had an eye operation and it took, I don't know how long, for that first operation. It took about six weeks. Well, I worked for him, you know. He never did; I did the work. And then about, oh, three months later, he had another operation, so I worked, you know.

[00:14:19] **LYNN:** But tell him about your heart attack, too.

[00:14:21] **LLOYD:** Oh, yeah.

[00:14:22] **LYNN:** He worked for—he had a heart attack in 84.

[00:14:25] **LLOYD:** And then he worked for me.

[00:14:27] **LYNN:** He worked for him.

[00:14:28] **LLOYD:** So it all comes out even.

[00:14:28] **LYNN:** They never lost a paycheck between the two of them.

[00:14:33] **HARVEY:** That's nice.

[00:14:35] **LYNN:** So they could really depend on one another. But, yeah, the ILWU . . .

[00:14:41] **LLOYD:** Oh, it's great.

[00:14:42] **LYNN:** . . . has given us a really—we're happy with our life.

[00:15:05] **HARVEY:** Much appreciated. Thank you very much.

[00:15:07] **LYNN:** We appreciate the health [benefits?] . Gosh, the health insurance is absolutely wonderful.

[00:15:18] **LLOYD:** Oh, yeah.

[00:15:19] **LYNN:** Absolutely wonderful. Nobody has it like we do.

[00:15:24] **LLOYD:** Do you know anything about the ILWU insurance?

[00:15:27] **HARVEY:** Oh, I know it's good health insurance. Yeah, I know it's very good.

[00:15:31] **LLOYD:** Richard [Austin] could explain it to you better than I could, I guess. But we want for nothing.

[00:15:40] **HARVEY:** That's great.

[00:15:41] **LYNN:** We don't know anybody who has insurance like we have.

[00:15:43] **HARVEY:** Right.

[00:15:46] **LYNN:** And it was fought for us through the union.

[00:15:50] **HARVEY:** Yeah. Well, Harry Bridges had a lot of vision.

[00:15:55] **LYNN:** That's true. That's true.

[00:15:59] **LLOYD:** Smart man.

[00:16:00] **HARVEY:** Yeah. Well, thank you very much.

[00:16:03] **LYNN:** You're welcome. I wasn't much help.

[00:16:06] **HARVEY:** Oh, you were a lot of help, actually. I appreciate it. Found out a few extra things about Lloyd, too. Very helpful.